Gabriela F. Arredondo. *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916–1939*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008. Pp. 272. Paper $28.00.

Gabriela Arredondo, Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, argues for the emergence of a Mexican immigrant community in Chicago's working class through the common experience of discrimination. Leveraging their pride in their home country between 1916 and 1939, these Mexican immigrants forged a *Mexicanidad* identity distinct from the one in their homeland. The chapters are organized thematically to address the influences of migration, living conditions in Chicago, prejudices, tensions within the Mexican-Chicagoan community, and debates over the concept of *Mexicanidad*. Arredondo relies on oral histories of Mexican immigrants who lived in Chicago in the first half of the twentieth century. She also draws on city, state, national, and library archival collections, as well as newspapers to understand how the Mexican immigrant community developed within working class Chicago. This social and cultural history explores the economic, gender, and subaltern qualities of the migration and community that formed in Chicago. Arredondo's sources describe a community that defined itself through its nationality, revolutionary ideology, and its responses to discrimination.

Arredondo chooses this narrow timeframe to understand the nationalist attitudes that developed in post-revolution Mexico, accompanied by the "color-blind" concept of *mestizaje* to assimilate indigenous people into modern Mexico as the country industrialized. *Mestizaje* and the differences in racial hierarchies between the United States and Mexico complicated the process of assimilation in Chicago, as Mexican immigrants interacted with other ethnic groups such as Polish, Irish, and Italian residents. By this time, European immigrant groups in Chicago were considered white. Mexican immigrants could not occupy spaces together due to discrimination from the white community: inter-ethnic tensions and the relatively small numbers of Mexicans dispersed the community throughout the city. Faced with discrimination from white landlords, housing options were limited for Mexicans. Often spaces were crowded and dilapidated, while decent housing was

reserved for white tenants. Racism, but also the "passable" skin color of some Mexicans shaped the types of opportunities allotted to them.

The following chapters focuses primarily on Mexicans' economic need for migrating to America and assist families back home and with a decent wage. Agricultural jobs and the railroads became the main source of employment for Mexican immigrants. Arredondo discusses Mexican ambivalence towards labor organizing, and the friction between US citizens, white immigrants, and Mexican "scabs." During union strikes, Mexican immigrant workers often replaced the workforce, creating tension with white workers. Immigrant women earned their own wages and exercised agency in their developing community.

The common experience of discrimination, tied with Mexican nationalism, defined Arredondo's concept of *Mexicanidad*. Mexican immigrants accepted alienation in a white dominated culture, while also expressing nationalist pride. Arredondo further explores this concept through post-revolutionary Mexican attitudes of nationalism, *mestizaje*, and racial tensions faced in America. Mexican immigrants formed a community out of necessity to combat prejudice in white Chicago. An academic audience, ranging from undergraduate students to professional historians, with an interest in cultural history, Mexican migrations, and Chicago's urban history, will find this book insightful and informative.

Anibal Cervantes